stocks. Alongwith this the price monitoring mechnism in the States and Union Territories need to be strengthened on a priority basis to cover the rural areas also.

(10) Additional allocations of rise, wheat and palmolein requested by some of the State Governments were agreed to.

(11) State Government have been flexibility to exempt any edible oil from the provisions of the Compulsory Packaging Order so that no undue hardship is caused to consumers.

(12) A special steady group will be set up to identify measures required to meet the needs of north-east States and Island Territories regarding the supply of essential commodities.

Impact of Sugar Import of Sugar Mills

2210. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the sugar mills in the country are in the red due to heavy import of sugar at low prices and at very low rate of import duty; and

(b) whether Government plan to remedy the situation; if so, the detail thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) There are no reports that most of the sugar mills in the country have gone red due to imports. However, the two apex organisation of the industry have represented to the Government that there has been large in flow of imported sugar and a steel fall in international prices and demanding an increase in the import duty on sugar from 5% to 40%.

(b) The matter regarding increase in the import duty is under consideration of the Government.

Storage Capacity for Foodgrains

2211. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) in how many blocks, storage capacities for upto 2000 tonnes of foodgrains are currently available;

(b) whether Government are proposing any financial package to the State Governments for setting up storage for foodgrains; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA PAL SINGH YADAV): (a) The details of blocks having storage capacity upto 2000 tonnes of foodgrains are not maintained by the Central Government.

(b) and (c) Since 1983-84 the Government of India have been operating a centrally sponsored scheme for construction of godowns of upto 2000 tonnes of capcity for storage of commodities supplied under the Public Distribution System (PDS). Financial Assistance is given to the States/Union Territories under the scheme in form of grant-in-aid and loan to meet the cost of construction of the godwons. Till 1991-92 the pattern of funding was 75% loan and 25% grant-in-aid. Since 1992-93 the pattern of funding is 50% loan and 50% grant-in-aid. Initially the scheme was restricted to the North-Eastern States, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir Sikkim and Adnaman & Nicobar Islands. In 1992, the scheme was extended to the blocks identified under the Revamped Public Distribtuion System (RPDS) in the entire country. It has been decided in the current financial year to extend the scheme to all such areas in the country where the need for such facilities exists. The total amount of financial assistance released under the scheme since its inception in 1983-84 till 15.12.1998 is Rs. 52.18 crore for construction of 522 godowns having total capacity of 2,51,042 tonnes.